

**(i don't wanna lie)
i've been relying on
you**

cathect

(i don't wanna lie) i've been relying on you by cathect

Category: IT (2017)

Genre: Established Relationship, Fluffy, I just love my boys, M/M, Modern AU, Protective Richie Tozier, bill studies too goddamn much, college fic, hurt/comfort sort of, this was a tumblr prompt

Language: English

Relationships: Bill Denbrough/Richie Tozier

Status: Completed

Published: 2017-11-11

Updated: 2017-11-11

Packaged: 2020-02-01 16:49:03

Rating: Teen And Up Audiences

Warnings: No Archive Warnings Apply

Chapters: 1

Words: 2,414

Publisher: archiveofourown.org

Summary:

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“Okay.” He snatches the cards from Bill's hand, ignoring the strangled noise of protest that he makes. “That's enough for tonight.”

“Richie, give them back.” Bill says, making a grab for them. Richie lifts them up and out of Bill's reach. “Richie, I'm serious.”

“So am I,” Richie snaps back, setting the cards on the table, away from Bill. “You need to eat something, and probably take a shower.”

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or the one where bill studies too goddamn much and richie puts a stop to it.

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Author's Note:

a few notes about this fic:

- this fic is based on the prompt: “you need to eat/sleep/shower (take care of yourself)” “after studying” “no now” from thesadlookonyourface on tumblr.
- this is a modern au/college fic.
- bill and richie have been dating since high school (a specific amount of time hasn't been determined but it hardly matters; all that matters is that it's an established relationship).
- this is based off of real experiences so, though this may seem like a super extreme example of this type of behavior, i promise that it really does happen.

thanks to erin as always for editing and cheerleading! i'd likely die without you.

Richie has always found Bill's work ethic admirable.

They've been friends for all of their schooling, dating for a lot of it, and Bill has always been relentless, working himself to the bone to keep his GPA at a solid four-point-oh. And, it's not like Richie makes terrible grades in comparison or anything; in fact, he's quite satisfied with his three-point-eight. But there's something about being near Bill Denbrough that would make anyone feel like they're slacking.

All throughout high school, Bill gives up most of his free time in favor of studying. He even misses their junior prom because he's sitting in front of his laptop, trying to perfect an essay that was likely perfect three hours earlier. The only reason he even goes to their senior prom is because Beverly and Richie team up to *drag* him there.

Bill graduates salutatorian and Richie can see the pain in his eyes when he finds out he wasn't number one. He thinks that it might be part of the reason that Bill only seems to get worse in college.

Even when they're just taking their basic courses, subjects that Bill

can pass in his goddamn sleep, he still pushes himself to the brink of insanity for his grades. Richie watches his boyfriend tear himself apart over every single assignment, no matter how small or insignificant.

But he lets it happen; he lets it happen because he knows how important it is to Bill. He bites his tongue every time Bill works himself to the point of actual sickness, and keeps going anyway. Every time he locks himself away for days on end to write a paper or finish a project.

It takes him until the end of their sophomore year of college for Richie to say something.

He comes home around one in the morning. He's still a little buzzed from the frat party that he and Beverly had been invited to— they'd tried to get Bill to go but, *surprise surprise*, they hadn't been able to pull him away from his notes for five minutes. He stumbles into the apartment to find Bill still curled up on the couch in their living room, eyes wide and drinking in the information on the flashcards he's been studying since before Richie left *four hours ago* .

"Bill?" Richie's suddenly ridiculously sober as he shuts the front door and locks it. Bill offers only a small noise of acknowledgement in the back of his throat, doesn't even look up at Richie's arrival.

Richie takes in Bill's appearance fully then: his face looks extra pale in the soft light coming from the lamp on the side table, there are papers scattered on every available surface within arms' reach. He looks incredibly dehydrated, and Richie wonders if he'd looked this bad earlier in the night and he just hadn't noticed. The thought is like a punch to the gut.

"Bill." Richie tries again, dropping his keys in the bowl by the door and making his way over to the couch. "Baby, have you moved since I left?"

"I got coffee." Bill answers quickly, turning over the flashcard in his hand and making a small noise of victory, moving onto the next one. "Twice."

“Have you eaten?” Then, after a shaky breath, “At all today?”

“I had a protein bar this morning.”

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“After I study s-some more.” Bill leans forward, pressing into Richie to make another feeble attempt at getting his study aid back. Richie pushes him back with a hand on his chest.

“No, now.” He makes sure his voice is firm and serious. “You’re done studying for the night, okay?” Richie adds the *okay* purely for Bill’s benefit and they both know it.

“Fine,” Bill relents and Richie feels himself relax. Leaning forward, he presses a gentle kiss to Bill’s lips. It takes a moment, but then Bill is kissing him back— just barely, but it’s enough to send Richie’s heart fluttering just like every other time.

“Come on.” Richie says when they break apart, offering Bill his hand. “I’m going to make you dinner.”

Make you dinner really just means digging a box of macaroni and cheese out of the back of their pantry and praying that they have the other ingredients that he needs— they do, thank god. He fills up a pot with water and throws it onto their shitty stove to boil.

By the time the food is ready, Bill seems to have mostly come out of his zombie state. His posture is a little more relaxed as he checks the notifications on his phone. Richie wishes he would say something,

initiate a conversation. Baby steps, he reminds himself. It's enough to have gotten Bill off the couch, away from his studies. Baby steps.

Richie fills up a bowl with a decent helping and sets it down in front of Bill, plucking his phone out of his hand as he does so. Bill looks up but doesn't really protest as Richie hands him a fork. Bill glances at his food then back at Richie like he's embarrassed.

"Stop that," Richie says instantly. "I know how fucking hungry you must be, and I won't make fun of you. Just go for it." Bill nods, eyes dropping back to the bowl and, a second later, he's eating faster than Richie has ever seen another human eat before.

For the next few minutes, Richie just watches Bill scarf down his dinner— mostly just to make sure that he actually finishes it. Neither of them says anything, and the silence is so loud that Richie actually jumps at the sound of Bill's fork clattering into his bowl when he sets it down.

"Sorry," Bill mutters awkwardly. Richie shrugs, standing up and taking the dishes to the sink.

"It's okay," he says, running some water through Bill's bowl before leaving it in the dishwasher. "Now, come on."

"What?" Bill asks as Richie makes his way back to the table and offers his hand.

"You need to take a shower," Richie says, offering a scrunch of his nose. "Like, really badly."

"Fuck off," Bill says, but he's smiling. "I can do that m-myself, dick." Still, he takes Richie's hand and lets the other boy pull him to his feet.

"Maybe," Richie says, a smirk pulling at his lips, "but it's way more fun if I'm there." And Bill can't seem to come up with an argument for that, so he lets Richie tug him towards the bathroom.

Richie tasks himself with getting the water running, turning it to the temperature he knows Bill likes it: disgustingly lukewarm. Bill stands awkwardly in the corner, his expression making it clear that there's a

million other things on his mind all at once.

“Bill.” Richie speaks softly, like he’s trying not to spook a deer. “Come here.” He reaches out for Bill, wrapping a gentle hand around the back of his neck and pressing a kiss to his jaw. He can feel the tension in Bill’s body, his muscles tight to an extent that has to be wildly painful.

Richie sets to work on the buttons of Bill’s shirt, leaving open-mouthed kisses in the wake of each one as he undoes it. Bill lets out a sigh, one hand resting against Richie’s bicep. A moment later, Richie is pushing the fabric of Bill’s shirt down his shoulders and letting it fall to the ground. Resisting the urge to press Bill up against the wall and jump his bones, he sets to work on the tie of the other boy’s sweatpants next.

“Richie, come on.” Bill mutters. “I can take my own clothes off.”

“You’re really going to deny me that joy?” Richie asks with a grin. “Getting you naked is one of my favorite things.” Bill laughs then, actually laughs, and Richie feels a warmth blooming in his chest.

“I can’t b-believe I love you.” Bill presses his nose into Richie’s forehead affectionately.

“I know, right? How fucking lucky are you?” Richie accepts the shove Bill delivers to his shoulder in response, actually giggling at his own dumb joke. “Now take your pants off.”

Bill obliges, kicking off his sweatpants as Richie works on own clothes. He’s still fumbling with his jeans when Bill pulls back the shower curtain and climbs in. Richie gives him a minute, taking his sweet time depositing his glasses on the sink before getting in as well.

“Hey,” Richie says softly. Bill hums in response, not opening his eyes. His head is dipped back to let the water run over his hair, and Richie admires the view. Bill finally starts to look a little more relaxed, less agitated, less like his thoughts are eating him alive. Richie takes Bill’s elbow, tugging him forward and turning him around. “Can I wash your hair?”

“Mm.” Bill replies. Richie smiles softly, pressing a kiss to Bill’s shoulder before turning around and grabbing the shampoo from the hanging shelf behind them.

Bill groans the moment that his hands slide into his hair, and Richie tries not to let the sound distract him from the task at hand. Bill’s hair is longer now; not by much, but enough that Richie can actually run his fingers through it while he washes it, then rinses it out. He’s meticulous, making sure to press his thumbs into the back of Bill’s neck, trying to rid his body of some of its tension.

“Lower.” Bill mutters, tilting his head forward. Richie nods even though Bill can’t see him, and moves his thumbs lower, digging into the space between Bill’s shoulders. Bill full-on moans, bracing himself with a hand on the wall in front of him and Richie’s pretty sure his eyes roll back into his head for a moment.

“Good?” He asks, voice a little hoarse. Bill nods and Richie steps forward to give himself better leverage. He presses his thumbs in harder, pushing his other fingers into the tops of Bill’s shoulders as best he can— he’s given Bill massages before, but they never served any real purpose other than trying to get his dick hard.

He does his best though and, after a few minutes, it seems like Bill is at least marginally less stiff. Richie drops his hands to his sides, stretching out the cramp that’s formed in his right.

Bill turns around then, ducks his head and presses a kiss to Richie’s lips. Richie responds immediately, mouth falling open against Bill’s and one arm wrapping around the other boy’s neck to bring him closer. Bill presses a hand into Richie’s lower back, and Richie has to pull away with a moan when their bodies press together. Bill takes the opportunity to move his lips to Richie’s jaw.

“Fuck, Bill.” Richie whispers. “Are we really doing this in the shower?”

“Why n-not?” Bill asks into Richie’s skin. Richie manages a sarcastic laugh.

“You know water isn’t a lubricant,” he says, feigning a lecture. Bill

snorts, lifting his head to look Richie in the eye. Richie doesn't need his glasses to read the look Bill gives him, and it sends a shiver down his spine.

"I have faith in us," Bill replies, pressing Richie's back into the wall. "We'll figure something out."

When Richie finally finishes cleaning up the kitchen, Bill's already curled up in their bed. He smiles at the sight, trying to gauge if he's asleep already or not.

"I'm not." Bill mutters, turning onto his back and propping himself up on his pillows. "You know I can't sleep without you." Richie shakes his head.

"Jesus you're pathetic," he says even as a grin spreads across his face. Climbing into the bed, he practically throws himself into Bill's open arms, knocking his forehead against his boyfriend's jaw in the process.

"Sorry," Bill says with a chuckle, smoothing a thumb over Richie's forehead where they'd collided. Richie waves his hand.

"It's fine."

"No, I mean..." Bill sighs and pulls him closer. "I'm sorry that I get like this. I know it can't be easy for you." There's no hint of sarcasm in his voice, and Richie's stomach drops.

"Jesus, Bill." Richie lifts his head from where it had been laying against Bill's chest. "This isn't about me, don't you get that?"

"I—"

"It doesn't matter what's easy for me," Richie pushes on, not willing to hear Bill try to apologize again. "What matters is that this isn't fucking healthy."

Bill glances away, but Richie catches his chin in his fingers, turning him back.

“I’m worried about you.” Richie whispers, searching Bill’s face with his eyes— he doesn’t even know what he’s looking for. “You are one of the smartest people I know, *annoyingly* so. But I get scared every time you get a fucking homework assignment that it’s the one that will cause you to work yourself to death.”

“I’m fine.”

“You’re not fucking fine, Bill.” Richie replies immediately. “You’re far from fine, and I’m sure it stems from something to do with your childhood, but Eddie’s the psych major not me.”

“I’ll have to ask him sometime.” Bill’s hands find their way to Richie’s waist, fingers slipping under the hem of his shirt.

“Yeah, well,” Richie pauses, trying to decide if he wants to press the matter any further. He lets go of Bill’s chin, deciding that he needs sleep more than he needs a lecture. “You should probably only do it when you have a fucking hour to spare. You know how Eddie likes to drone.”

“Yeah.”

They sit in silence for a minute, Bill’s thumb smoothing circles into Richie’s hip as he drops a kiss onto his forehead.

“Thank you for looking out for me, Richie.” He mutters into Richie’s hair. “Even when I don’t want you to.”

“Of course, Big Bill.” Richie responds, nuzzling into Bill’s neck. “Always.”

Author’s Note:

thank you so much for reading!

drop a comment below letting me know what you thought!